

Committee for Public Planting Meeting Minutes 11 April 2012

Present: City Arborist David Lefcourt, Denise Heintze, Chantal Eide, David Davis, Paula Cortes, Tom Flynn, Florrie Wescoat, Kathleen Kelly, Madeline McDowell, Maggie Booz, Emily Axelrod, Julianne Schwarzer and Caroline Matthews

The meeting was held at City Hall in the Ackerman Room due to construction at 147 Hampshire St. City Councillor Minka van Beuzekom was present.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 by David Davis.

1. Review Minutes – The minutes for the meeting of March 14, 2012 were unanimously adopted.
2. Cambridge Community Development (CDD) Update – David Davis reported on his telephone conversation with CDD's Susan Glazer regarding establishing an open, consistent and productive line of communication between the CPP and CDD. Glazer stated her interest in building a relationship between the two organizations and that her attention had been diverted by long term planning for various areas of the city with a view toward anticipating the needs of the city in fifty years. Details such as the role of street trees, the prospect of underground phone and electric lines, etc are far too detailed for the current exercise. Also mentioned was that CDD posts on-line all of its hearings on applications for building permits. Therefore, members of the Public Planting Cttee can readily access information on hearings along with plans submitted with applications and bring to the Public Planting Cttee's attention any concerns that an application to the CDD might signal to CPP for its action. While CPP might not have formal decision-making authority in the strict legal sense, CPP might have a voice in decision making arising from the number of its members, the knowledge of its members, its history of activity in the city and its formal role within the city.

Reference to long-term city planning lead discussion to Northpoint (near Museum of Science) and its emphasis on tall narrow buildings that allow more space for parks. Question raised as to obligation of developers to provide open space in proportion to volume of space occupied by buildings.

Discussion regarding what CPP's mandate should be. Inevitable interface with zoning code. For example, idea that CPP adds perspective to decision making process touching as it does on space within the city, species of trees best suited to the city and the size of planting beds. Example: definition of Open Space to include priority being extended to give priority to trees that enhance city's canopy.

Plan for CPP members to research various cities' tree ordinances to see if we can find a model on which to base recommendations to the City Council for an enlargement of the scope of the CPP's work. The ordinances to be researched are as follows:

Emily Axelrod:	Brookline and Boston
Chantal Eide:	Princeton, N.J. and Falls Church, VA
Florrie Wescoat:	Boulder, CO and Takoma Park, MD
Tom Flynn:	Somerville, MA and Arlington, MA

Julianne Schwarzer	Savannah, GA and Charleston, SC
Paul Cortes:	Oakland, CA
Kathleen Kelly:	Buffalo, NY and Albany NY
David Davis:	San Francisco, CA; Salem, MA and Greenwich CT

3. Arbor Day – Activities are planned at the Morse School for Friday, April 27th where the emphasis will be on pruning. A week earlier on the 20th at the Cambridge Service Festival at the High School the Junior Service Program will be promoted, furthered with a give away of 200 Serviceberry (Amelanchier).
4. Arborist Update –
 - a. Discussion of Gator watering bags and the need to promote their use and educate users on their proper use. Expectation by DL that watering by planting contractors will increase this year.
 - b. Water by Bicycle (Tree Ambassador) Program to be used again this summer. Will mix hours so as to reach residents after hours. Person hired will be paid co-op rate of 30hrs/week x 10 weeks at approximately \$16/hr.
 - c. Question raised as to whether or not dead trees are identified and replaced according to the planting contract. DL stated that he does the inspections and that dead trees are replaced where practical, meaning where stump grinding is feasible and/or sidewalk not too narrow under ADA guidelines.
 - d. Mention of possible City Council resolution banning Imaldicloprid (Neonicotine) use in the city.
 - e. City Councilor Minka van Beuzekom and another spoke about City's transition from individual parking meters to 'Paystations' and possible impact of installation of new wiring required by this new technology on existing tree roots. DL will look into this issue.
 - f. Old question revisited: is there a way to improve quality of RFPs in order to improve accountability for proper selection, planting and care of new street trees.
 - g. Tom Kelly referred to his on going work with the City's Ellen Coppinger on establishing a 'gateway' at the junction of Route 16 and Massachusetts Avenue at City's boundary with Arlington.
5. Next meeting – slated for May 23 to serve as the May and June meetings combined. Meeting adjourned at 7:10p.m.